UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED

A/AC.109/L.1797
16 June 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SMALL TERRITORIES, PETITIONS, INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Rapporteur: Mr. Hossein LOTFI HORMOZABADI
(Islamic Republic of Iran)

QUESTION OF DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON DECOLONIZATION

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION		1 - 2	2
I.	CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION	3 - 13	2
II.	CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS	14 - 22	4
III.	WEEK OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLES OF ALL COLONIAL TERRITORIES, AS WELL AS THOSE IN SOUTH AFRICA, FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (24-28 MAY 1993)	23 - 24	5
IV.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	25	6

INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with its programme of work for 1993, adopted at its 658th meeting, on 13 April 1993, the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance considered the question of dissemination of information on decolonization at its 665th, 666th, 669th and 670th meetings, on 11, 13, 25 and 27 May 1993, respectively.

2. In its consideration of the item, the Subcommittee held consultations with representatives of the Department of Public Information and of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat.

I. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

3. In his statement, the representative of the Department of Public Information said that the Department's multimedia activities covered all aspects of decolonization, including questions relating to Western Sahara, the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean region. The Department continued to provide coverage for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (1990-2000), emphasizing the activities of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

4. As part of its regular coverage of United Nations activities, the Department issued a total of 37 press releases in English and 37 in French, relating to the work of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly, as well as to that of the Special Committee on decolonization and its Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance. These press releases were furnished to journalists upon request, as were posters, pamphlets and other relevant materials. Special press briefings by the Secretary-General and other high-level officials of the United Nations and by senior officials of the specialized agencies, as well as delegations, were arranged and serviced at the request of correspondents.

5. The UN Chronicle, a quarterly magazine published by the Department in the six official languages of the United Nations, featured several articles on decolonization in 1992, including: "Western Sahara: uncertain future" (June 1992); "Palau very near 'a decisive choice' about its status, Trusteeship Council told" (September 1992); and, on Western Sahara, "Morocco and POLISARIO urged to ensure success of settlement plan" (December, 1992). The Department also published the statement made by the Secretary-General on 10 February, at the opening of the 1993 session of the Special Committee on decolonization. The statement, headlined "United Nations achievements in the field of decolonization and the task ahead", was featured as a "United Nations Focus" article in English and French for dissemination to the press.

6. Decolonization issues, particularly those dealing with the remaining Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories, were covered in a number of radio programmes produced by the Department. The programmes were broadcast in Arabic, Bangla,

Chinese, Dutch, English, French, Kiswahili, Sesotho, Setswana, Spanish, Xhosa and Zulu; they were disseminated worldwide. Radio features produced included "Assisting Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean" and "Decolonization and apartheid".

7. Activities within the United Nations system related to decolonization were televised and widely disseminated through feeds and dubs made available to networks and other television stations and through television news packages and video highlights provided to international news syndicators.

8. The Department continued to distribute the educational video entitled "About the United Nations: Decolonization" in English, French and Spanish to 124 United Nations film/video libraries around the world. This video has also been placed with one distributor in the United States of America and one in Canada, and has been promoted at film and video festivals in France and Germany. Designed for use in secondary school social studies and history courses, the video examines the role of the United Nations in developing the principle and practice of self-determination for people living in Non-Self-Governing Territories.

9. The Department's Audio and Visual Materials Library unit continued to make tapes and cassettes on decolonization issues available to correspondents, delegates, United Nations radio producers and outside producers.

10. Through its network of 67 United Nations information centres and services, the Department of Public Information continued its world-wide distribution of a number of its publications which included: Objective: Justice - Special Issue on Decolonization, vol. XXII, No. 2, December 1990 (DPI/1108); Decolonization: The Task Ahead - Profiles of 18 Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories (DPI/1109); Teaching about Decolonization (DPI/1170); and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (DPI/856). It also distributed issues of Decolonization bulletin, published by the Department of Political Affairs.

11. The United Nations information centres also distributed press releases of the Department of Public Information relating to decolonization. Some information centres conducted special activities during the reporting period, particularly on United Nations Day, to promote the Organization's goals and work in the field of decolonization.

12. To promote among non-governmental organizations awareness of United Nations activities in the field of decolonization, the Department of Public Information continued to disseminate information materials to the 1,300 non-governmental organizations associated with the Organization. The materials included the Decolonization bulletin; the "Plan of Action for the Full Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples" (DPI/685); the booklet Special Committee on Decolonization (DPI/912); Decolonization: The Task Ahead ...; and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

13. At Headquarters, the Department responded to public inquiries and requests for information on decolonization by distributing, as handouts or through the mail, publications, pamphlets, booklets and brochures. In 1992, an exhibit on

decolonization was among those held in the Public Lobby and along the route of the guided tours.

II. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS

14. In his statement before the Subcommittee, the representative of the Department of Political Affairs reviewed that Department's activities in 1992 in the area of dissemination of information on decolonization. Those activities had increased as a result of the implementation of certain new measures called for by the General Assembly in its relevant resolutions, the most recent of which were 46/72 of 11 December 1991 and 47/24 of 25 November 1992. By those resolutions, the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to continue to take concrete measures through all the media at his disposal, including publications, radio and television, to give widespread and continuous publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

15. The representative of the Department of Political Affairs noted the following activities in 1992. First, the production of the Decolonization bulletin series had been accelerated; second, cooperation with the Department of Public Information in the area of decolonization had been strengthened; third, oral dissemination of information through speeches and lectures of conferences organized by universities and various professional groups had been vigorously promoted; lastly, the systematic distribution of documents on decolonization issues, particularly in connection with seminars, had increased the flow of information.

16. With regard to the first point, three bulletins had been issued over the past 10 months: Decolonization bulletin No. 41 outlined the work of the Special Committee in 1991 and of the General Assembly (Fourth Committee) at its forty-sixth session; No. 42 related to the regional seminars (Vanuatu, May 1990 and Barbados, June 1990) organized by the Special Committee; and No. 43 dealt with the role of the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations in the implementation of the Declaration. In addition, No. 44 on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was to be printed shortly, to be followed by the issue on the work of the Special Committee in 1992 and of the General Assembly (Fourth Committee) at its forty-seventh session. Steps had already been taken towards the publication of a further series of bulletins.

17. The Department had continued to provide technical advice to the Department of Public Information in the preparation and issuance of published materials, such as articles on decolonization, which had subsequently appeared in the UN Chronicle. The Department also cooperated with the Department of Public Information in the preparation of a number of pamphlets dealing with various aspects of decolonization. Prior to publication, these information materials had been reviewed, verified and updated by the Department of Political Affairs.

18. The representative of the Department of Political Affairs said that the Department of Public Information had helped to publicize the decolonization work of the United Nations among the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. In this connection, he recalled that the regional seminars organized by the Special

Committee since 1990 had all recommended that measures should be taken to increase the flow of information between the United Nations and the Territories in both the Pacific and the Caribbean regions.

19. The Department had also worked with the Department of Public Information in disseminating information to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The various United Nations information centres had also been involved in promoting a two-way flow of information with the Territories. Those centres had done their best within the means available to them. According to the representative of the Department of Public Information, the financial situation of the centres did not permit their staff to make regular visits to the Territories they are supposed to cover; effective coverage would require at least two visits a year to each island, which was scarcely possible under current circumstances. The representative of the Department of Political Affairs said that in the absence of visiting missions, the benefits that would result from such regular visits would doubtless be appreciated by the Subcommittee.

20. Staff of the Special Committee secretariat had been very active in the oral dissemination of information through speeches and lectures at seminars and symposia organized by universities or socio-professional groups, both in New York and elsewhere in the United States.

21. The Department of Political Affairs also attached great importance to the distribution of documents dealing with decolonization issues. Particular care had been taken to reply individually to requests for information on the work of the United Nations in this field. Such documents had been given broad dissemination by the Department at the regional seminars organized by the Special Committee which were held in Vanuatu and Barbados in 1990 and in Grenada in 1992. The Department had already taken steps towards the distribution of documents on decolonization at the regional seminar to be held in Papua New Guinea in 1993.

22. The representative of the Department of Political Affairs said that the Department would take into consideration the guidelines and recommendations the Subcommittee would make at the conclusion of its current session.

III. WEEK OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLES OF ALL COLONIAL TERRITORIES, AS WELL AS THOSE IN SOUTH AFRICA, FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (24-28 MAY 1993)

23. In accordance with its organization of work for 1993, adopted at its 658th meeting, on 13 April 1993, the Subcommittee considered the question of the Week of Solidarity at its 669th meeting, on 25 May 1993.

24. The Subcommittee approved the following programme of activities to be undertaken during and in the framework of the Week:

(a) A public screening of films produced in English, French and Spanish should be held;

(b) Articles in the Department of Public Information publications, the UN Chronicle and Objective: Justice (1993 edition), should feature the activities of the Week;

(c) The Department of Public Information, in addition to short items in news and current affairs magazines, should produce special feature radio programmes on the Week;

(d) The United Nations information centres and information services worldwide should undertake activities which would reflect the current situation and expectations with regard to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(e) The Statement of the Chairman of the Special Committee on the activities of the Week should be issued as a press release;

(f) Information packages containing United Nations publications on decolonization issues should be distributed to the media and the non-governmental organizations.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

25. Having concluded its examination of the item, the Subcommittee submits the following conclusions and recommendations for consideration and approval by the Special Committee:

(1) The Special Committee reiterates the importance of effecting the widest possible dissemination of accurate information on decolonization to further the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960) and to mobilize world public opinion in support of the peoples of colonial Territories in their efforts to achieve self-determination, freedom and independence.

(2) The Special Committee reiterates the great importance it attaches to the work of the Department of Political Affairs. The Committee urges the Department to continue to discharge its mandate, taking into account all the Territories under the consideration of the Committee.

(3) While noting the active participation of the Department of Public Information in the work of the Committee and its efforts to produce and disseminate information on decolonization, to monitor the responses received from the United Nations information centres and to report thereon, the Special Committee requests the Department:

(a) To continue to intensify, through all the means at its disposal, its work of publicity in the field of decolonization, basing its activities in this regard on the Charter; the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; the Plan of Action for the Full Implementation of the Declaration, contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 35/118 of 11 December 1980; the items on the agenda of the Special Committee; and all relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and of other organs of the United Nations active in the field of decolonization;

(b) To underline in all its activities that, despite major achievements in the process of decolonization, colonialism has not been completely eradicated and that the activities of the United Nations in this field should be given high priority until all of the goals of the Declaration have been achieved;

(c) To continue to disseminate information on all remaining colonial Territories under the consideration of the Special Committee, including information on military bases or facilities in any of those Territories;

(d) To disseminate more widely, particularly through parliamentary bodies, non-governmental organizations, mass media and universities, decolonization resolutions and decisions of the United Nations, including those adopted by the Special Committee, as well as other basic materials concerning decolonization and to distribute them, especially through United Nations information centres, in local languages when appropriate, in particular in those regions where there are still Non-Self-Governing Territories, and in countries that are administering Powers;

(e) To disseminate, or continue to disseminate, information in official languages of the United Nations, particularly in French, which is one of the two working languages of the Organization;

(f) To pursue its cooperation with the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies and to provide it on a regular basis with varied publicity material and information concerning United Nations activities in the field of decolonization;

(g) To continue to disseminate materials prepared by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries concerning decolonization;

(h) To adopt measures aimed at providing full coverage of all activities of relevant United Nations bodies in the field of decolonization in press releases in both English and French;

(i) To continue to provide information material on decolonization through, inter alia, exhibitions to be shown outside United Nations Headquarters, to all United Nations information centres and to increase assistance to them in all related activities;

(j) To produce new visual material on problems of decolonization in cooperation with the Special Committee;

(k) To utilize materials pertaining to the participation of specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in the decolonization process, and to distribute those materials, as appropriate, through the United Nations information centres.

(4) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information to provide it with feedback reports from the United Nations information centres regarding their dissemination of information on decolonization and, in particular, on the activities undertaken in 1993 in relation to the celebration of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of All Colonial Territories, as well as Those in South Africa, Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights.

(5) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts to ensure that information bodies provide better coverage of decolonization in all regions.

(6) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs, to increase its speaking engagements at university campuses on the subject of decolonization and to inform the Subcommittee on the experience and the results achieved.

(7) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information and the Department of Political Affairs to continue to take into consideration the important role being played by non-governmental organizations in the decolonization process and in the dissemination of information on the situation in all the remaining colonial Territories under consideration of the Committee. The Committee requests the two Departments to continue to intensify their cooperation with non-governmental organizations in the dissemination of information on decolonization, particularly through briefings and the provision of relevant printed materials.

(8) The Special Committee appeals to the mass media to regard it as their task to contribute to the elimination of the remaining manifestations of colonialism by disseminating information on the decolonization issues and to provide support to the peoples of the colonial countries.